

MEDIA RELEASE

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PUBLIC SCHOOLS STILL WAITING FOR GUARANTEE ON ADEQUATE FUNDING

Parents, teachers and principals joined today to urge the Rudd Government to outline how it will ensure public schools have enough resources to guarantee every child a high quality education.

New legislation introduced to Parliament today continues the Howard Government's school funding arrangements which favour private schools.

Parents group, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), the Australian Education Union (AEU), the Australian Government Primary Principals Association (AGPPA) and the Australia Secondary Principals Association (ASPA) call on the Prime Minister not to ignore the needs of approximately two million students in public schools.

Prime Minister Rudd is reminded of his pre election commitment in which he acknowledged that *"...the Commonwealth has a prime obligation to adequately and properly fund government schools."*

Ms Jenny Branch, President, ACSSO said: "With greater investment public schools could reduce class sizes, increase individual attention for students who need it most and provide better and more modern facilities and equipment.

Mr Angelo Gavrielatos, Federal President, AEU said: "A recent study by education funding expert Dr. Jim McMorro found that without additional investment public schools will suffer a funding cut within three years.

"The study recommended at the very least an immediate investment of \$1.5 billion to restore overall federal government public school funding to 1996 levels," said Mr Gavrielatos.

Mr Andrew Blair, President, ASPA said: "The most recent OECD figures show that Australia ranks second last out of all developed nations when it comes to direct public expenditure on our public institutions. The same report shows that experienced Australian teachers work longer hours and are paid less to teach larger than average class sizes.

"If as a nation we are serious about lifting overall student performance and addressing underachievement we must invest in our public schools," said Mr. Blair.

Mr Tony McGruther, President, AGPPA said: "The pursuit of excellence and equity also requires additional targeted funding to address entrenched disadvantage.

"The Rudd Government has proposed a National Partnership Agreement for Low SES schools but we have no information so far on how much additional money may be announced nor how many schools it will cover," said Mr. McGruther

"Additional funding is also needed to make up the \$2 billion annual shortfall in capital investment for public schools. We need modern buildings and facilities fit for 21st century learning," said Ms Branch.

For further comment, please contact:

Ms Jenny Branch, President ACSSO
Mr Angelo Gavrielatos, Federal President AEU
Mr Tony McGruther, President AGPPA
Mr Andrew Blair, President ASPA